

## CLAIMS

What is claimed:

1. A method of cooking a pizza comprising placing a pizza in an oven with at least the central region of the pizza resting upon a pizza supporting device having an upper supporting surface such that the central portion of the pizza is raised above the level of the peripheral region of the pizza during cooking by means of the upper supporting surface.
2. A device for supporting at least a portion of a pizza during cooking in an oven, the device comprising an upper supporting surface for supporting at least a central region of a pizza such that said central region is raised above the level of the peripheral region of the pizza during cooking.
3. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the upper supporting surface comprises a substantially circular raised portion, the diameter of the upper supporting surface being less than the diameter of the pizza to be cooked.
4. A device as claimed in claim 3, wherein the diameter of the upper supporting surface is between 25% and 75% of the diameter of the pizza to be cooked.
5. A device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the diameter of the upper supporting surface is between 40% and 60% of the diameter of the pizza to be cooked.

6. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the device comprises an inverted dish or saucer like member having a substantially planar upper supporting surface and an outer edge region extending downwardly therefrom.
7. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the device is dome shaped.
8. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the device comprises a plurality of radially extending arms extending outwardly from a common central axis.
9. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the device is formed from a heat resistant material such as card, metal, ceramic or a suitable polymeric material.
10. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the device is formed from aluminum.
11. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein at least a portion of the upper supporting surface of the device is perforated to allow steam and moisture to escape from the underside of the crust in the central region of the pizza.
12. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the upper supporting surface of the device has at least one aperture therein.
13. A device as claimed in claim 12, wherein a single aperture is provided in the

centre of the supporting surface.

14. A device as claimed in claim 12, wherein the upper supporting surface comprises a peripheral rim and a central supporting ring attached to the rim by means of at least two spaced radial legs.

15. A device as claimed in claim 13, wherein the central supporting ring is attached to the rim by three to six equal spaced legs.

16. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein at least one cut or slot may be provided extending from the outer peripheral rim of the device towards the upper supporting surface, the cut or slot opening up to allow the peripheral rim of the device to be squashed flat, the device being formed from a suitably resilient material such that the device returns to its original shape once the squashing or retaining force has been removed and is of sufficient thickness and strength that the device can subsequently support a pizza without deforming.

17. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein at least the peripheral rim of the device is formed from an elastically deformable material such that the peripheral rim can be squashed flat yet can retain its shape upon removal of a squashing or retaining force to allow the device to support the central region of a pizza above a cooking surface.

18. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the device is made from a 'memory' thermoplastic material such that it can be supplied in a flat condition but returns to a domed or inverted dish shape when heat is applied thereto, for example when placed in an oven beneath a pizza.

19. A device as claimed in claim 8, wherein the device is from sheet material, such as heat resistant card or plastics, comprising a plurality radially extending arms extending from a common vertical axis and being interconnected on said common axis such that the lower edges of said arms define a lower supporting surface of said device and at least a portion of the upper edges of said arms define said upper supporting surface of said device.

20. A device as claimed in claim 18, wherein the device is assembled from two planar members provided with transverse slots adjacent a central region thereof whereby said members can be interconnected perpendicular to one another to define four radially extending arms arranged at 90 degree spacing.

21. A device as claimed in claim 18, wherein the device is formed from a flat blank having score lines and/or cuts thereon to permit the blank to be folded to define a raised upper pizza supporting surface.

22. A device for supporting at least a portion of a pizza during cooking in an oven, the device comprising a baking tray or plate of sufficient size to support a

pizza to be cooked, the tray having a raised central region defining a raised pizza supporting surface for supporting the central region of the pizza above the peripheral region thereof during cooking.